

YOU AT THE AIRPORT. TO SAY I AM SORRY DOES-NOT SEEM TO BE QUITE ENOUGH. IT'S ONE OF THOSE TIMES WHEN LITTLE WORDS FAIL TO CONVEY OUR FEELINGS. I BELIEVE THE BEST WAY I CAN DO THAT IS TO SAY THAT HAVING MISSED THE PLEASURE OF TALKING WITH YOU IS THE ONE GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT OF A VERY DELIGHTFUL HOLIDAY SEASON. TO THOSE OF US HERE WHO KNOW OF YOUR WORK IN THE HIBISCUS SOCIETY YOU ARE NO STRANGER. MRS. BLACKSTONE TOO IS WRITING YOU AND I HOPE TOGETHER WE MAY BE ABLE TO CONVEY TO YOU OUR THANKS FOR HAVING THOUGHT OF US AND OUR DEEP REGRET AT HAVING MISSED YOU. PLEASE TRY US AGAIN, WON'T YOU.

I WOULD HAVE ENJOYED TELLING YOU ABOUT MY HIBISCUS IN PERSON. HAVING MISSED THAT PLEASURE, DO YOU MIND IF I TRY TO WRITE YOU ABOUT THEM AND MY WORK WITH THEM. I WILL TRY TO BE BRIEF.

HAVING BEEN TOLD BY MY DR. BACK IN 1946 THAT I HAD ONLY A SHORT TIME TO LIVE, I CAME TO HOUSTON TO BE NEAR THE BROTHER WITH WHOM I NOW MAKE MY HOME. I PURCHASED SOME VACANT LOTS ADJOINING MY BROTHER'S HOME AND STARTED GROWING FLOWERS. OF THIS I HAD NO KNOWLEDGE - I HAD ONLY FAITH AND A DETERMINATION TO PROVE MY DR. WRONG. IN '48 I SAW MY FIRST HIBISCUS, A SINGLE RED. THEN AND THERE I RESOLVED TO GROW HIBISCUS. FROM A HOUSTON NURSERYMAN I PURCHASED 200 LINERS, KNOWING NOTHING OF VARIETIES. I LEFT IT TO THE NURSERYMAN. HE GAVE 198 SINGLES - PINK, RED, & YELLOW, 2 DOUBLES - 1 RED, 1 YELLOW AND VERY GENEROUSLY GAVE ME ONE PINK. WHEN I ASKED FOR INFORMATION ABOUT GROWING THEM I WAS TOLD SIMPLY: "NOTHING TO IT." I GREW THEM - ALL 200 OF THEM. SOME TO A HEIGHT OF 4 FT. WITH NO BRANCHES AND I ALMOST CRIED WHEN BY ACCIDENT I BROKE ONE OFF ABOUT 15" FROM THE TOP OF THE CAN. SOON LITTLE BRANCHES BEGAN TO APPEAR ALL OVER THE LITTLE TRUNK AND TO SEE IF THEY ALWAYS BRANCH WHEN CUT

BACK, I TOPPED SEVERAL AND MADE MY FIRST DISCOVERY WITH HIBISCUS. MY INTEREST SOARED - SO DID MY FAITH. SOON IN THE THRILL I WAS GETTING FROM MY WORK I OFTEN FORGOT I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A DYING MAN. MY INTEREST HAS NEVER WANED. NEITHER HAS MY FAITH AND I HAVE HAD 11 YEARS OF LIFE I WAS NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE & THEY HAVE BEEN GOOD YEARS A GOOD LIFE FULL OF THRILLS AND GLORIOUS COLOR.

FROM A SICK MAN WITH 201 HIBISCUS I AM THO' NOT WHAT ONE MIGHT CALL WELL, I AM A MAN ENJOYING MUCH BETTER HEALTH AND 130 VARIETIES OF HIBISCUS, HIBISCUS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED MORE TO MY LEARNING TO LIVE WITH SOME HANDICAP AND LIVE A FULL NORMAL LIFE. HAS ANYONE A BETTER RIGHT TO LOVE THESE LOVELY FLOWERS. I AM COMPILING A LIST OF THEM & SHALL BE HAPPY TO SEND YOU A COPY IF YOU CARE FOR ONE. I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY 112 OF THEM WITH THE HELP OF YOUR NOMENCLATURE LIST AND ONE BY REV. GIBSON OF GALVESTON, TEX. AND THE COLOR CHART.

I HOPE TO VISIT YOUR STATE IN EARLY SPRING TO SEE SOME OF YOUR GARDENS AND PICK UP SOME VARIETIES NEW TO OUR TEXAS.

AND NOW MAY I WISH YOU AND YOURS A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR.

PORTER D. CURRY

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DEAR COLONEL AND MRS. CALAIS:

IT WAS INDEED A PLEASANT SURPRISE AND GREAT HONOR TO HAVE YOU VISIT WITH DR. AND MRS. CARROLL AND US DURING YOUR STAY IN BROWNSVILLE. I RECEIVED YOUR NICE LETTER ON MONDAY FOLLOWING AND WAS SO PLEASED WITH IT. GLAD YOU LIKED OUR WEATHER AND TRULY, IT IS NICE. OCCASIONALLY WE DO HAVE A COLD SPELL WITH CHILLY WINDS THAT CAUSE WINDBURN TO PLANTS OR A LIGHT FROST LIKE THE ONE OF DE-